

HIGHER EDUCATION UPDATE

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News from the

CALIFORNIA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Toward a Greater Understanding of the State's Educational Equity Policies, Programs, and Practices: The Reality of the California of Today

This series of six Higher Education Updates (with accompanying Fact Sheets) explores California's policies, programs, and practices designed to provide all our students with an equal opportunity to pursue their educational goals -- goals that benefit both individuals and our state. The Commission's intention in publishing this series is to enhance understanding among all Californians and our policy-makers about the importance of educational equality to our State's future. Beginning in April, 1997, the Commission will be publishing a Higher Education Update approximately every two months through February, 1998. At that time, the series will conclude with the publication of an Update that presents a set of options for the State to consider for furthering our goal of educational opportunity for all Californians.

This first Higher Education Update in the series describes the realities of California -- its strengths and challenges -- as the decade of the 1990s ends. The current realities -- which reflect both our state's past and our immediate circumstances -- provide the anchor point for subsequent discussions in this series about our vision for the future and the means by which to achieve that vision. As T.S. Eliot wrote over 60 years ago:

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
(Four Quartets, 1935)

The decade of the 1990s in our state has been marked by rapid change. Many of these changes were unexpected and have the potential to influence the future of the state well into the next century. In fact, the enduring legacy of this decade may well be that change is occurring, and will continue to occur, with a speed and to an extent unprecedented in California. The clearest manifestation of that change is exploding population growth coupled with demographic shifts and economic dislocations caused both by a deep recession and severe reductions in industries that have sustained our state's economic growth in the past.